
**JOURNAL OF THE
BARBER COIN COLLECTORS' SOCIETY**

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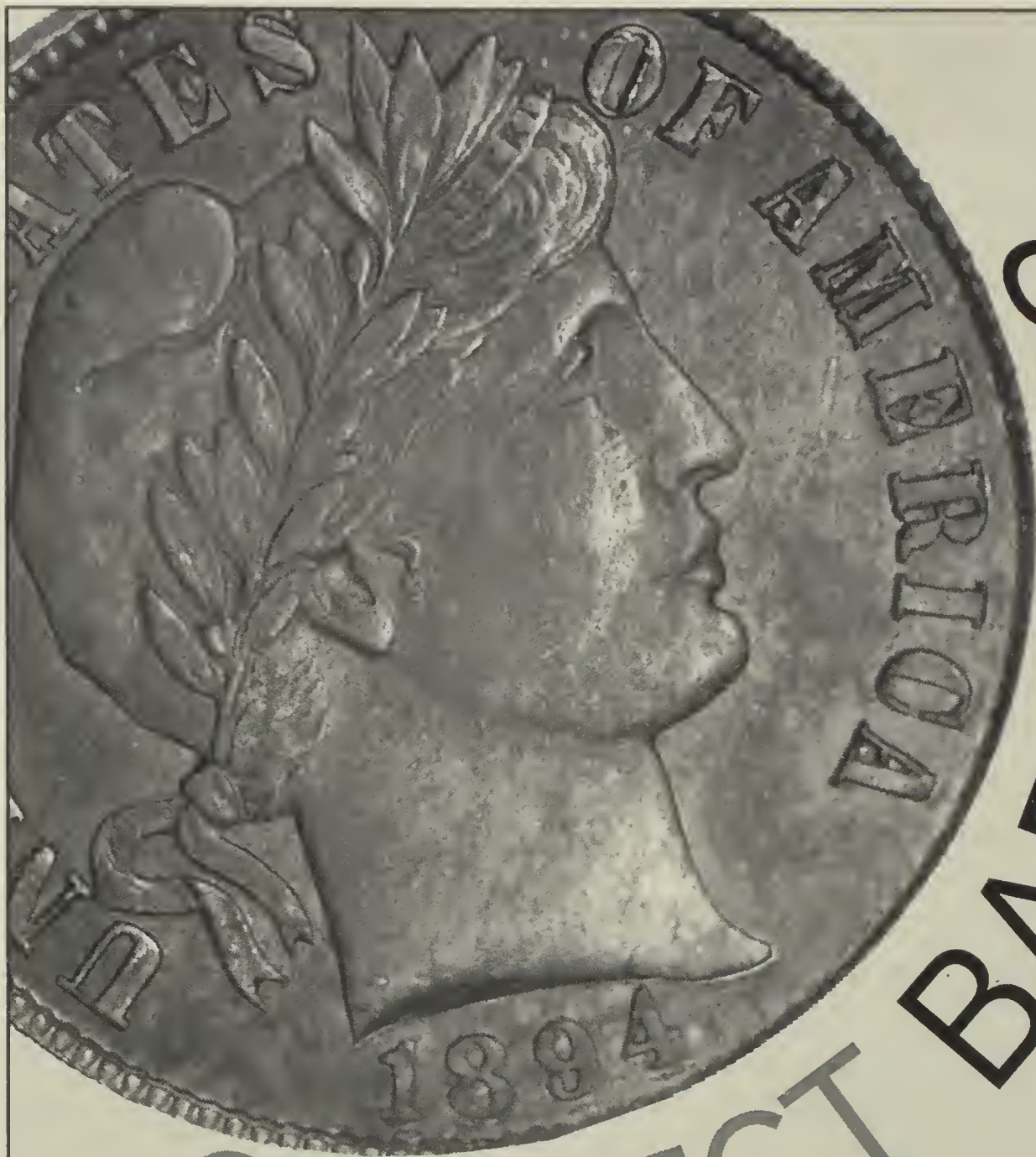
1906 Proof Liberty Nickel



NGC PF66 Cameo

See page 22

Photo courtesy of John Frost



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JOURNAL OF THE
BARBER COIN COLLECTORS' SOCIETY

Founded in 1989 by Steve Epstein
ANA Club Member C-146266

OFFICERS

Philip Carrigan.....*President*
Eileen Ribar.....*Editor, Secretary/Treasurer*
Steve Hustad.....*Variety Coordinator*
Matthew Student.....*Contributing Editor*

ADDRESSES

John Frost, Webmaster: <http://www.BarberCoins.org>

For articles, submitting coins to be photographed, information for Barber Bits, Letters to the Editor, advertisements, layouts, etc.: Eileen Ribar, 2053 Edith Pl., Merrick, NY 11566; Tel. 516-379-4681; E-mail: emcrib@optonline.net

For variety information, questions and comments: Steve Hustad, E-mail: shustad@comcast.net

For membership dues (\$15 per year; Canadian residents \$20), information about the BCCS and back issues of the BCCS Journal: Eileen Ribar, 2053 Edith Pl., Merrick, NY 11566; Tel. 516-379-4681; E-mail: emcrib@optonline.net

For BCCS issues in general: Philip Carrigan, 1944 Ash St., Waukegan, IL 60087; Tel. 847-625-0381; Fax: 847/599-1071; E-mail: philrph1892@cs.com

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BCCS PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In the last issue of the *Journal*, I wrote a line or two on weather. This weekend (Aug. 27-28) there are major hurricane warnings for Irene to hit the eastern coast from New York to Florida. I hope all members and friends are prepared and safe.

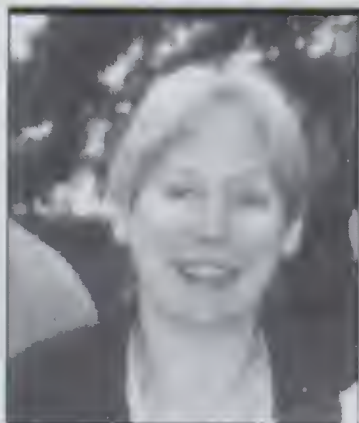
Last week and part of the previous week, I attended the ANA World's Fair of Money and the ANA pre-show. Certainly, the Tuesday through Saturday ANA Show was successful, usually busy on the bourse floor, full of meetings and presentations and marked with seemingly endless auction sessions. As a member of the Chicago Coin Club, I was co-chair (with Mike Gasvoda) of the Numismatic Theater. This activity gave a neat opportunity to enjoy speakers I know well and learn about areas I know little about (artistic aspects of Napoleonic medals).

The BCCS meeting was held Saturday morning, led by John Frost and your President with eight members or prospective candidates in attendance. John presented his idea for an expanded, more formalized regional BCCS meeting program. This idea brings along designated regional coordinators for geographic areas from the West Coast to New England. We should benefit organizationally from this initiative and I thank John for adding to his efforts in arranging regional meetings.

While there were coins and more coins available at ANA, one item is foremost in my mind. Heritage, at the pre-ANA show and on Friday evening, sold a 1904-S Barber Half in AU-58 (PCGS) for over seventeen thousand dollars (\$17,000+). The coin looked lovely and could be accommodated in most any high-grade set. I must mention one other rarity sold that evening. This was the 1802 half dime in AU-50 (NGC). Among legendary rarities in US numismatics, this coin is not tied to questionable mint practices such as the existence of 1913 Liberty five cents or 1804 dollars.

When I returned home, I opened an E-mail from the daughter of a deceased Barber collector. She was inquiring about the BCCS - Charles Barber silver rounds we sold in the early 1990s which were part of her deceased father's collection. Joe Haney was an original member of BCCS and had a keen ability to discover Barber varieties. (Look at Dave Lawrence's books on Barbers and note the acknowledgements there to Joe.) His daughter reminded me that Joe died in 2002. As I've said before, numismatics is more than collecting coins!

Numismatic regards,
Phil Carrigan



BCCS EDITOR'S MESSAGE

I begin with the sad news that BCCS member and contributing editor of the *Journal*, Rich Dula, passed away March 15th of this year. His enthusiasm for Barber coins, which he shared with us regularly, will be greatly missed.

In July, member Matthew Student attended a major coin show for the very first time and shares his impressions and experiences there in this issue. I found his enjoyment of it to be contagious and am tempted to join my husband when he stops in at the next local show. There are many coin shows scheduled during the Fall and Winter months. Perhaps you will consider attending one in your area.

Upcoming BCCS Regional Meetings

- **PNNA Fall Convention**, Portland OR, Saturday October 22. Time to be announced. Please check the website for updates.
- **Bay State Coin Show**, Boston, MA, Saturday November 12. Time to be announced. Please check the website for updates.
- **Whitman Baltimore Expo**, Friday November 18, 3:00 p.m.
- **Houston's Money Show of the Southwest**, December 1-3. Meeting date/time to be announced. Please check the website for updates.
- **FUN 2012**, Orlando FL, Friday January 6, 9:00 a.m. Note: BCCS will have a club table on the bourse floor.

THE JOURNAL NEEDS YOUR ARTICLES!

Your article submission(s) automatically enters you in the BCCS Literary Contest. The article receiving the most member votes will win a 1st place prize of \$50. Second place prize will be \$25 and third place will be a free one year BCCS membership. So, make sure your membership is up to date and get your article to Eileen at the post office or e-mail address on page 3.

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE IS Nov. 25th

A Widely Repunched 1893-S Barber Dime Mint Mark

By **Michael Fey**

While attending the Spring Whitman Baltimore Show, I had the opportunity to acquire a nice coin. The coin is an NGC AU58 1893-S Barber Dime with a label attached indicating it that is an S/S/S variety. I was not particularly looking for this coin, but apparently it found me.

As a collector of rare die varieties, finding a relatively high grade business strike Barber coin with some interesting feature is a rare occurrence. Although I didn't know much about this variety, I was informed that it was listed in the latest *Cherrypickers' Guide*. I also recalled that BCCS did a census that included this variety. However, it was not until I saw the incredibly widely repunched mintmark that I was sold on acquiring it. I bought it not knowing how rare it might be.

Using my iPhone, I was referred to the BCCS Census data on the web performed by John Frost in the Fall of 2008. It showed that 179 1893-S Barber dimes were reported by club members with 29 having the S/S/S mintmark. One was reported in MS, with eight in AU. A quick look at the PCGS population report showed only one coin graded, a PCGS 64 example, while the NGC population report showed a total of 6 graded, with only 1 graded in MS 62 and the next lower grade, an AU55.

While the 1893 S/S/S variety is fairly new to the world of publicized varieties, it appears to be rare in high AU to Mint State. One thing is for sure, the S/S/S repunching on this variety is pretty spectacular.





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When is a Variety Not a Variety?

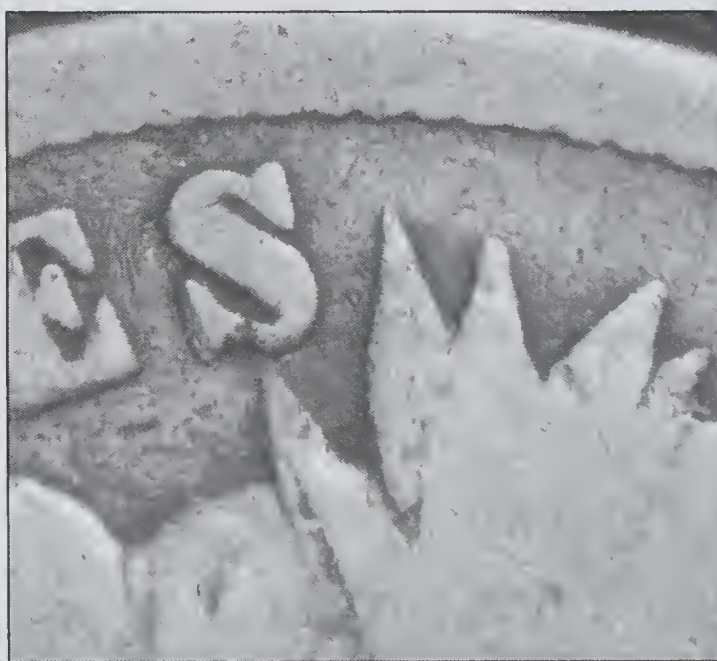
When It's Too Worn to Tell!

A few months ago, Eileen forwarded to me a couple of photographs her patient husband Brian had taken of a pair of coins sent in by a member. This enthusiastic member was convinced that these two coins showed a hub change on the obverse of these two Barber Dimes as evidenced by the laurel leaf points atop the "LIBERTY" banner in Liberty's hair. Both dimes were quite worn, one much more than the other.

The two coins are a 1908-O and a 1909-D. The grades are (respectively) about VG and G, but it's hard to be sure, as the photos only show roughly the top third of the obverse. But what is clear is that the '08-O is showing about 3 1/2 letters in "LIBERTY," while the other shows none.



1908-O Dime



1909-D Dime

This member indicated that the laurel leaves on the '09-D touched the "S" in "STATES," and were more blunt than the leaves on the '08-O. Because of that, this looked like a variety to him.

Well, sorry, but no. But interesting and informative they indeed can still be!

Though not indicative of a new variety (in my opinion anyway), what these two coins DO show is how something can sometimes appear to be some-

thing it's not. For example, the 1908-O (the VG coin), despite technically being a slightly higher grade than the '09-D, appears to be much more flatly struck (which is typical of many New Orleans issues). The 1909-D, on the other hand, appears to 'have received the full attention of the press in its youth' (so to speak!). This makes the more highly raised laurel leaf tips on the '09-D appear much more distinctly, while the flatly struck 08-O's laurel leaf tips practically blend in with the coin's background.

In any case, these are illustrative of a phenomenon that can fool any of us if we don't study the subjects more closely and determine exactly what happened. The big clue here is the flat strike on the technically 'higher grade' New Orleans piece. The flat strike and blending in with the coin's field also made the leaf tip appear farther away from that "S" than it really is. A fun exercise it was though!

On a related topic - there ARE genuine (and very distinct!) obverse hub changes that were made to the Barber Dimes. And these changes did indeed result in those laurel leaf tips being altered from blunt to more pointed (along with a couple other obvious changes) – but this occurred in 1901. I'll get lazy and refer you to my previous article in a 2004 BCCS *Journal*: Volume 15, No. 1, pages 8 through 13 for the large format drawings that clearly illustrate these 1901 changes. (Note that the Reverse hub changed in that year as well, and all of these changes are very distinct).

Even more importantly, the 1901 reverse hub changes resulted in both reverse types being available for most dates/mints from 1901 through 1904! I seriously don't know why these aren't collected more as independent varieties, as the changes are easy to spot!

In any case, our thanks go out to our eagle-eyed member who was kind enough to send in the two coins so they could become the basis for what I hope is an interesting little article for you!

Steve Hustad
BCCS Variety Coordinator



BCCS Regional Update – Coming Soon to a Coin Show Near You!

By **John Frost**, BCCS Regional Program Chair

In the last issue of the *Journal*, we announced the BCCS Regional Program and I asked for assistance in setting up meetings at regional shows around the country, with the goal of giving BCCS members more chances to meet with each other, and to introduce the Society to more non-members with the goal of increasing membership.

The response was better than we expected! We got several volunteers to either set up and host meetings, or to provide on-site support to some meetings already scheduled. At our 2011 Annual Meeting in Chicago, I was able to present our plans and line-up to the members in attendance. Here is a summary.

Of course, we will continue to have our Annual Meeting at the summer ANA each year, as well as our Winter Meeting at FUN in January. In addition to this, we can announce the following:

John Frost will host BCCS meetings at each Whitman Baltimore Expo (3 per year) as well as the annual September Whitman Philadelphia Expo. For each of these 4 shows, our meetings will be on Fridays at 3:00 p.m. This will allow attendees to spend most of the day on the bourse floor before taking a break and going to our meeting. In addition, the New Hampshire Coin Expos and Boston Bay State Show will also feature BCCS meetings. I am happy to have received offers from numerous BCCS members to assist with the East Coast meetings.

Glenn Holsonbake will chair the West Region, and has arranged for BCCS meetings to take place at the Long Beach Expos, along with the 2 annual shows of the PNNA (Pacific Northwest Numismatic Association) in Seattle and Portland. The next meeting is in October in Portland. We hope you can join some of these meetings. Glenn would welcome assistance.

Note: by the time this Journal hits the streets, our Regional Meetings at the Philadelphia and Long Beach September shows will have already taken place.

Vern Sebby will host a BCCS meeting at Central States, which is one of the key shows in the Midwest, although we are still hopeful that somebody may choose to host a meeting in conjunction with at least one additional show in the

region. Let us know at the website (BCCS@barbercoins.org) if you are interested and able to help (at any show).

Finally, to get us started in the South, Glenn Holsonbake (again) will initiate a meeting at Houston's "Money Show of the Southwest" in December, although it would be great if somebody from the area can help Glenn with this show, and perhaps take an active role for future shows.

Club Tables on the Bourse Floors

From time to time at selected shows, the BCCS will have a club table on the bourse floor, where we can meet the general public who may not have been able to attend our meeting, and tell them about the club, and present an exhibit. It is simply a fact that most collectors of Barber coins do not know about the BCCS. These tables can be an outstanding way to meet other Barber collectors and prospective members. Plus it is a lot of fun – just ask any of us who have spent time behind one!

Below is a photo of the BCCS table at July's NH Coin Expo, staffed by members Matthew Student on the left, Joe Casazza standing, and myself. We had a great exhibit of Barber rarities and key dates, along with sample *Journals* and the new BCCS brochure and membership application.



We had good traffic at the table and introduced many people to the BCCS. We also signed up 7 new members at this show! At shows where we have a club table, we will often share with another club (like the Liberty Seated Collectors Club) so that there are more people to staff the table, and to allow more free time for each of us to be away from the table.

New BCCS Banners

At the BCCS Annual Meeting in Chicago, the Society decided to invest in some club banners/stands, which will be used to promote the Society at shows and meetings.

Following the enthusiasm about the launch of our Regional Program, and the success at the NH Coin Expo (where 20 people attended the meeting, and many stopped by the club table), we decided that we needed to make it easy for people to find the BCCS when we are meeting at shows, as well as to present an attractive banner to accomplish this. As seen in this picture of the Liberty Seated Collectors Club table, this free-standing banner attracted people to the table in droves.



The BCCS will obtain our own banners of similar style and will place one in each Region, so that a meeting host can use it to promote the meeting and/or the club table. A mock-up of the BCCS banner can be seen here on the right, and will be done in the maroon color that is our trademark on the website and new brochures.

These banners are high quality, durable, and break down to a small package that is only 24"x6"x6" in size, and assembles in just 2-3 minutes. It is easy to pack and travel with.

We should have them before the meetings at the October and November shows, and definitely before our meeting at FUN in Orlando in January.

We hope these banners will help the BCCS reach more Barber collectors and help us make our membership growth targets.

Please watch the Website for up-to-date listings of upcoming Regional Meetings. They will also be listed in each issue of the *Journal*. We hope you will join us for the meetings, and can help us on the show floors to promote the Society whenever we have a club table. And look for the new club banner!

BARBER COIN COLLECTORS' SOCIETY

Founded 1987



Image courtesy of Heritage Auctions

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Engraver of the U.S. Mint from
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Barber Bits

Varieties Census, Part 1: Barber Quarters

In January 2012, the BCCS will conduct the first of a 4-part series of varieties census studies. In the same manner that we conducted the rarity surveys from 2006-2009, we will do one denomination at a time over the next four years.

The census will ask collectors to report what coins they have of numerous listed varieties in the different grades. The object is to provide insight as to what varieties are most widely held, and which ones are held in small numbers. The Census listings will be grouped by the variety category, including: doubled dies, repunched and misplaced dates, repunched mintmarks, different hub combinations (notably 1892 and 1900), and others. The Varieties Committee will publish the survey form in the upcoming December-January issue of the *Journal*, and will also post the survey on the website.

There will also be a guide for identifying characteristics of the varieties, including how to classify repunched dates and mintmarks, how to differentiate from strike (or shelf) doubling, etc. Descriptions, along with sketches and photos, may be used to assist in this.



Letters/Emails to the Editor:

I have just joined BCCS and would like to introduce myself. My name is Evan Kopald and, like many of us, I started collecting when I was a youngster when I operated my father's cash register in his drug store on Melrose Avenue in Hollywood, CA in the mid 1950's. I favored Lincoln Head Cents. When I would get most of the openings filled in the old Whitman blue folder, I would journey up to Hollywood Blvd. and visit Bowers and Ruddy, fork over 8 bucks and get the '09-S VDB, and, for 10 bucks, the '14-D.

After attending pharmacy school, I set up a small professional pharmacy in Coachella, CA in 1971 where I posted a sign: I TRADE DRUGS FOR COINS. I got the usual stuff, zinc Lincolns would be presented as "I found this rare coin," breaking hearts when I broke them the bad news. I moved my sign into a bigger store in 1976, it had a fountain, and before I knew it 36 years passed by before you can say, "Take one tablet every four hours."

I continued to collect, but never established a method or a collection; I just bought what I liked. In 1987 I responded to an advertisement in Coin World from a large cent dealer. That was it for me. I fell in love with the brown toned and red-brown copper coins. During the next 25 years, of the 1,000 or so varieties I amassed 641 different varieties. I had almost all of the 1794's of which there are some sixty different varieties. But when the ones I needed started hitting high four and low five figures, I lost interest. And some of these coins are so rare R-6 and even R-7 pieces that are really ugly but expensive. I decided to sell them. I wrote my own price list with anecdotal information, more a fixed price list with a heart than a usual list of catalog that has no personal connection. It is possible to have a distorted form of human affection for these round metal objects.

It took a year to sell them all, well almost all, some favorites I've kept. But a vast void entered my life; I had let my collection go and needed something else. I thought I would start a collection of used 747's, but my parking lot is too small. I attempted to revive my stamp collection from my youth, but I just couldn't get up on the lingo and the stamps I liked the most, US, run into the same problem that the large cents did. Early choice stamps, like Scott 1 and 2, run into the big bucks.

I'd already completed a nice set of Buffaloes, Lincolns, and Mercury dimes. What now? I went to my safety deposit box thinking I would look through what I had and start a new collection. I ran across a couple of slabbed MS-62 Barber Quarters I had won in an auction some years before, and rethought my tepid aversion to the Barber design.

I decided that I would attempt a set. A year later and I've found out that Barber Quarters are difficult. I mean Miss Liberty won't ever argue with you, but where are the nice XF-AU coins? So, now I have a new challenge, just trying to find these coins with nice original surfaces. Of course there is that ONE, if you know what I mean. But what you get for a AG-G '01-S is enough to scare kiddies during Halloween, they are ugly and so worn. I saw a nice G-4 on a web dealer's listing that I had been watching for a couple of months. I had the feeling that he wanted to loosen up some dinero as the price grew lower every few weeks. When the price hit a figure I could handle, I fired off an e-mail. Yup, I waited too long, he had placed it with someone else the day before.

Since I keep most of my BQ's in a Dansco album, I've got a gaping hole where that '01-S needs to be.

*Good Hunting,
Evan Kopald*

Dave Lawrence Barber Books now On-line at DLRC Website

All three David Lawrence Barber coin books - *The Complete Guide to Barber Dimes*, *The Complete Guide to Barber Quarters*, and *The Complete Guide to Barber Halves*, as well as *The Complete Guide to Certified Barber Coinage* by David Lawrence & John Feigenbaum - are available at the DLRC on-line library website: <http://www.stellacoinnews.com/>. Simply click on "Reference Books" and scroll down to the book title you want. Access is free, no membership required.



BCCS "blind" Email List

The BCCS web service has the capability to send messages using a "Blind Carbon Copy" setting, which means everyone on the list gets the email, but nobody's email address is displayed. The advantages to having such a list include the ability to post last-minute BCCS get-togethers at regional shows and other types of Society communications, if needed, without having to wait for the next issue of the Journal. It is completely voluntary, and is open to members only. If you wish to be on this list, please send an email to: BCCS@BarberCoins.org and your name will be added. Your information will not be disclosed to anyone, and you will only receive email regarding BCCS business from the BCCS email account.



BCCS Advertisement Rates

1/8 page	1 issue.....\$12	4 issues.....\$40
1/4 page	1 issue.....\$20	4 issues.....\$70
1/2 page	1 issue.....\$30	4 issues.....\$100
1 page	1 issue.....\$70	4 issues.....\$250
1 page inside front - rear cover	1 issue..\$80	4 issues.....\$300
1 page outside rear cover	1 issue...\$125	4 issues.....\$400

My Inner Child Had a Blast in Manchester

By **Matthew Student**

Thursday, July 28 - Day One - The Adventure Begins

Whoever said that getting there was half the fun should be shot! My trip began with about an hour and a half standing on the side of I-91 with a blown tire and another two and a half hours sitting in a Firestone Tire shop in Cromwell. A three hour trip turned into more than seven hours and my mood was less than stellar. My car was full of books, coins and clean underwear. And my head was full of worry. Oh well. Go with the flow. Go with the flow. I pulled up to the entrance of the Radisson Hotel at about 7:50 p.m., greeted with the sounds of a country music band playing to a crowd of locals. I just wanted to empty my car and crash in my room. I would make my apologies on Friday. Wow, I was in Manchester, NH!

Friday, July 29 - Day Two - The NH Coin and Currency Expo Begins

My room was nice, but I needed to be on the bourse floor. After I checked out all of the available sources for coffee, I got my badge and walked over to the joint exhibition table. I threw my arms up into the air as I introduced myself to John Frost, my mentor, with the following: "I am so sorry! I can explain. I had a flat tire and I did not arrive until 8 p.m. last night." He understood.

As this was my first experience at a major regional coin show, I was petrified. What was expected of me? Although John had written to me that it would be informal, I could not let myself relax. I was, after all, representing the BCCS. And although John insisted that I have fun this was not, as yet, within my vision. I came to work. I came to teach. And then the public was admitted.

Little by little I began to relax. I met and chatted with Joe Casazza from Nashua, NH. He was like me: an ordinary BCCS member who came to assist and to have fun. I wished that I had his calmness. And I met Gerry Fortin, from Maine, who represented the Liberty Seated Coin Collectors group. Talk about being between two great exhibitions! The finest and the finest. Such an opportunity.

I took my cues from John and Gerry. I welcomed people, inviting them to feel free to sit down, take a look, ask questions. There were four display cases. I had access to two of them. But you know what? I was less interested in studying these "have not seen daylight in a decade" coins and much more interested in serving the public. Yeah, I am a frustrated teacher at heart.

And then the time for the long planned "Joint Meeting" of the BCCS and the LSCC arrived. We left the exhibit table in the capable hands of a security guard and gathered in an adjacent meeting room. Both John and Gerry gave their pre-

sentations. Now, I had no idea what would be considered a “success” but both of these gents were very pleased with the turnout. The group photo is now available on both the BCCS and the LSCC sites.

The rest of Friday is a blur. John, Joe and Gerry left at 5 p.m. I was free to roam the bourse floor until 7 p.m., just looking, not buying, making small talk.

Saturday, July 30 - Day Three - The NH Coin and Currency Expo Continues

While Friday was a trial by fire, Saturday was a funfest. Not much sleep, but the adrenalin kicked in. That, and several cups of coffee got me going. My thoughts about this show kept coming back to young folks. Teaching adults was one thing, but teaching kids was in my brain since the beginning. After several hours, my cohorts abandoned me one by one. Gerry went off to teach a seminar and John and Joe went off to “do the bourse floor.” These gents were evidently dealing with their own inner children, and the kids were winning!

Earlier, I had gone to my room to gather the last of my bags and camera. When I got back to the floor I saw a group of kids and parents. I whipped out the camera. Turned out, this was the young folks session sponsored by the New England Numismatic Association. My spirits were boosted even higher. Conducted by Jack Haroian and Jack Kiley, the John Kittredge YN Program is sponsored by NENA and the Kittredge Foundation. This program is wonderful! The session drew a healthy crowd of families. The kids were captivated by the talks and delighted with the handouts. Ah, the family that shares a love of coins shares a lot of fun. I would had taken a seat in back, but duty called me to our own table.

After this group broke up, several youngsters stopped by our table for a look see. And poor me! I was alone. One lad asked what we had for sale. I explained that we were an educational exhibit and that we had nothing for sale. Then I remembered something. During the last minute packing, I had thrown into my bag a 1964 Lincoln Cent stamped with the bust of John F. Kennedy. I showed it to him with the explanation that people were deeply affected after his assassination. All sorts of tributes and souvenirs appeared on the market. I told the lad, “I cannot sell you this. But if your father gives his permission, I CAN give it to you.”

Well, his dad understood where I was coming from. He told me his son was interested in history and that he would learn a lot from this penny. My cost: one cent. The joy of teaching a young collector: priceless. OK. So this is not related to Charles Barber. But my inner child could not be stopped.

And THEN my casual use of the word “penny” came back to haunt me. Another lad stopped by the table with his grandmother. He renewed my faith that young people are interested in coins and most very interested in learning about them. He told me, with just a bit of superiority, that the USA never had a penny denomination. “The correct term is ‘cent’.” Well, how could I not like this kid?

I saw an opportunity and I went for it. I opened the case and handed him

my single contribution to the exhibit: an 1895-O Dime. He examined it like an old pro. I answered his question about condition rarity and how to use the 12 hour analog clock to identify a given location on a coin. When he asked for an explanation about rarity factors, I grabbed a copy of a handout which John had prepared. I circled the 1895-O date and its R5 rating and wrote: "I saw this at the NH Coin and Stamp Expo - 2011 - Good collecting - Matthew Student." Oh! My inner child was pleased! Grandma nodded with approval.

Sunday, July 31 - Day Four - The NH Coin and Currency Expo Draws to a Close

Sunday afternoon I saw a woman speaking to Ernie Botte, the organizer of the Expo. She had a problem common to many people: her father had died and she had an accumulation of his coins to deal with. I listened with interest and offered to take her around the floor. Ernie had told her to buy a copy of the *Red Book*, so I whisked her to the book seller. I explained I am not a dealer, I am a collector, but she could ask me anything and I would do my best to answer her. And we TALKED! When she told me that she remembered, as a child, her father showing her the coins that he had received from HIS father, I understood what I needed to tell her. So I said, "You are so fortunate to have this memory. Many people inherit coins without the slightest idea what they meant to a family member. Unless the family member has shared the love of coins, the joy is lost. This memory will allow you to remember your father's joy and allow you to have fun as you research your holdings." Or words to that effect. She felt better. A lot better.

As we walked back to Ernie, I introduced her to a dealer I had spoken with earlier. We talked about her situation and he also gave her good advice. The woman now had two good contacts and left with a feeling of confidence.

The dealer asked if I had sold my collection of Buffalo nickels. I replied that I had had only partial success selling it. He and the dealer next to him decided to pool their remaining cash and buy my collection jointly. Boy, was I happy! Had I not stopped to help the woman, I would have carried the collection home. She did tell me that she would say a prayer for me. God must have been having a slow day because the prayer was answered pretty darn quickly!

Monday, August 1 - Day Five - The Journey Home

My visit to Oz was at an end. Unlike Dorothy, I could not just click the heels of my ruby slippers three times. I would have to drive. I filled the tank with gas and hit the road. I had only two thoughts: go south and go west.

Two new tires and a front wheel alignment:	\$264.09
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Awakening one's inner child:	Priceless!

Astounding Barber Proofs in an August New Hampshire Auction

By **John Frost**, BCCS #892

Imagine having somebody coming to you and saying they have some coins from their father's collection. And also imagine hearing some of them were "old proof sets" from the late 1800s and early 1900s. This happened to a friend of mine from New Hampshire, who, with his wife, owns an auction company, Centennial Auctions. You can further guess what his expression was when he discovered that aside from a 9-coin 1883 proof set, there was a run of 24 other proof sets from 1892-1916 that were still in their original mint packaging, and that none of those had ever been opened!

Apparently an ancestor had gone to the mint nearly every year and purchased a proof set, and then just put them away in a box. And through the last 100 or so years, the coins had been handed down from generation to generation without even being looked at. This resulted in the most astounding numismatic discovery my friend had ever made (or anyone else I know personally).

When he was in the presence of the consigning family, he was about to open the set on the top of the stack – the 1895. The family asked "Are you sure it's a good idea to open these? Aren't they worth more unopened?" After a while, he did convince them that (1) they needed to open them to see what coins were actually in the sets, and (2) to get maximum value for what were surely pristine coins, they would need to be seen, certified, and photographed. When he opened the 1895 set and looked at the proof Morgan Dollar, all he could think to say was "Oh my!" And it just got better from there!

Given the fact that these coins were in their mint-sealed envelopes, these coins, mostly Barbers, were 100% un-messed with, original, and within each year, remarkably similar in toning. The coins were all sent to NGC for grading and of the total of 136 coins in these sets, the following grades levels were received: 11 68s, 34 67s, 44 66s, and 19 65s. That's 108 of 136 grading Gem or better!

If you were in Manchester at the NH Coin Expo in July, or the Chicago ANA on Thursday, you may have had the opportunity to view these amazing coins. Two Barbers that really got my eye were the 1907 Quarter which graded PF68+ * Cameo (!), and the 1897 Half, grading PF67+. Both are pictured here in the article, and the photos don't begin to do them justice.



1907 Barber Quarter, NGC PF68 * Cameo

The sale was held on August 22, and after high bids for the individual pieces were determined, bidders were given the ability to bid on the intact sets (after the sum of the bids for the individual coins in a set were totaled up and 10% added). The auction room was very full, and 7 phone bidders also participated. Most of the major players were there, and impressive prices were realized. 21 of the 25 sets were sold intact, and only 4 sets broken up and Registry Set collectors obtained their must-have coins.



1897 Barber Half, NGC PF67+

Some Highlights of the Sale

The first-Barber-year 1892 set sold for \$22,400 (with the silver Barber

coins grading PF66-67), the 1896 set selling for \$67,000 (Barbers grading 66-67+), and 1909 set selling for more than \$61,000 (Barbers grading 65-68). The 1909 Half (PF68) is tied for finest known, like numerous other coins in the auction (4 were new finest known, eclipsing previous graded coins).

The stunning 1897 Half (PF67+) received an initial bid of over \$40,000, but the whole set sold intact for more than \$68,000. The incredible 1907 Quarter (68+ * Cameo) was part of one of the four sets broken up, and by itself realized \$28,750. One of the nicer Liberty Nickels, a 1906 (PF 66* Cameo), was part of a set that sold intact for \$29,325.

1906 Liberty Nickel,
NGC PF66 Cameo*



Not surprisingly, the most expensive proof set was the 1895, which sold for \$258,750, which was more than \$60,000 more than the sum of each individual coin in the set! This set went to a long-time collector, who plans to keep the set intact in his cabinet for a long, long, time. The total realized for the 25 proof sets exceeded \$1.25 million. A number of people were heard saying “Even the big auction houses would not have brought in more money.” I don’t disagree – it was an amazing event.

If you want to see the complete roster of the coins (the catalog and prices realized are still online as of the end of August), you can see their website at www.centennialauctions.com and look for the “Time Capsule Collection” under Coins & Stamps. You’d better hurry, as there is no telling how long they will leave this sale on their site.

I know I have never had the pleasure of seeing so many beautiful Barber Proofs in one place, and probably will never do so again. How many other collections of this type are still out there to be discovered?

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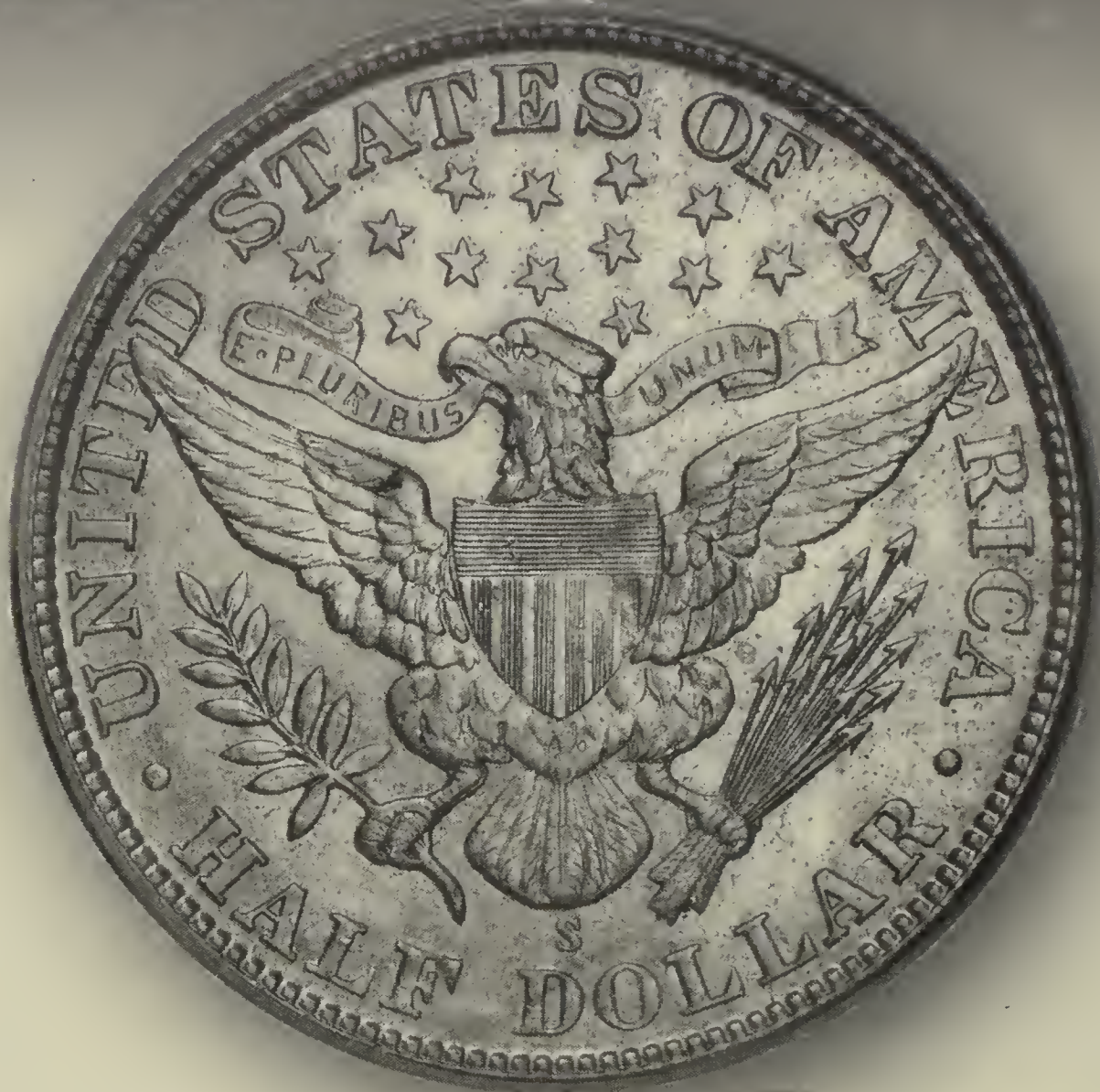
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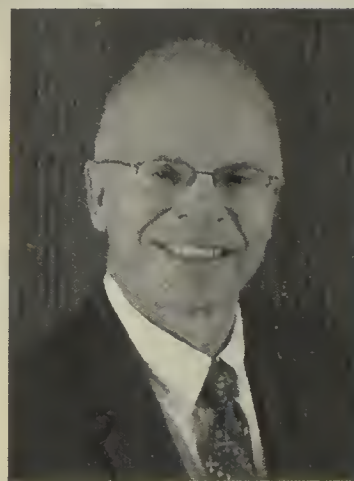
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If you haven't joined the collecting community at HA.com yet, your free membership allows you to view more than three million coin images with incredible detail. You can enlarge substantially more than the example above, which needs no explanation for collectors of Barber halves. Images can be found in our Auction Archives, which contain full descriptions, prices realized, and wonderful full-color enlargeable images. And all for free. You can quickly and easily search for any numismatic item you desire (i.e. all Micro O sold). It doesn't get any easier than that to do your numismatic research.

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